

**National Marine Sanctuary Program  
Advisory Council Information Bulletin  
February 2004**

**Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary**

The sanctuary will be partnering with Santa Barbara City College Marine Diving Technology Program, the Marine Advanced Technology Education Center (MATE), and University of California at Santa Barbara's Marine Science Institute to train local teachers on how to work with students to build remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) in the classroom. This weekend's workshop will take eight teachers aboard the Research Vessel SHEARWATER to see a state-of-the-art ROVs in operation and then field-test their own "home-built" ROVs. The long-term goal of this initiative is for teachers to recruit student teams, build ROVs, and enter in the national MATE ROV competition to be held in Santa Barbara in June 2004. Teachers can use the ROV competition to build an interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates numerous subjects such as physics, biology, chemistry, oceanography, engineering, computer programming, English, and mathematics.

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary**

A 30' cabin cruiser, the *Kriegie Fever* ran aground in the back reef area of Looe Key reef just after Christmas. The vessel is reported to have been rapidly taking on water and purposely ran into the shallow region of the back reef to prevent from sinking in deep water. High winds and seas have prevented sanctuary biologists from completing a full assessment, but preliminary information from in situ and aerial photographs indicate that the injury is limited to the rubble zone with minimal damage to living coral. The Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Bureau of Operations, Aviation Division supported the effort by providing a helicopter overflight for a sanctuary biologist. A full assessment will be completed as weather permits. Several radio stations interviewed the spokesperson for the sanctuary about this grounding and other groundings that occurred in 2003. In addition, the Keynoter newspaper ran an article on the grounding.

NOAA Diving Program conducted NOAA Working Diver and Dive Master training in Key West from January 12 – January 30, 2004 on the campus of Florida Keys Community College. Sanctuary staff supported the dive training with small boat support and supplemental dive instructors.

Restoration activities continue at the *Adaro* grounding site in the sanctuary. The *Adaro*, a 68' Jarrett Bay sportfishing vessel, went hard aground at Grecian Rocks reef in August 2003, creating twin trenches across the reef crest. The restoration work consists primarily of backfilling the trenches with a combination of quarried limestone rock, cement and reef framework salvaged from the grounding site. Once the structural repair is completed, the 800+ colonies of living hard and gorgonian corals dislodged by the grounding will be reattached to the restabilized substrate. Typical winter sea conditions have hampered progress somewhat, but the contractors performing the work have made the best of the "good" days and the project has moved along as well as could be expected.

### **Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary**

Education coordinators and several sanctuary volunteers hosted a sanctuary exhibit at the Houston Boat Show January 9–18, 2004. This annual event draws an estimated 130,000 people each year who are primarily boaters, fishers and outdoor enthusiasts. All attendees are potential target audiences and interested stakeholders for the sanctuary, especially during the management plan review process scheduled to kick off in the next two to three years. This is the first focused overture to developing a working relationship with these audiences.

### **Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary**

The education coordinator continued planning with Savannah–Chatham County Schools representatives and others for a teacher's workshop to be held June 14 – 18, at Oatland Island (environmental) Education Center. Arrangements were also made for a trip for teachers to Wassaw Island National Wildlife Refuge during the loggerhead sea turtle nesting season.

Sanctuary Student Ocean Council students participated in the introductory SCUBA diving course held at Diving Locker and Ski Chalet in Savannah. The Education coordinator and education intern supervised the program while the outreach and communications coordinator documented the event with digital images.

The sanctuary's science coordinator captured on video the elusive *Dendrodoris warty* or warty sea slug. The slug could not be identified from the existing field guides so images were sent to experts affiliated with the University of California at Santa Cruz (official mascot: the banana slug). They responded with excitement because pictures of the slug are very rare and little is known of its life history. It immediately was named slug of the week with great fanfare. The science coordinator's technique of getting excellent still images off digital video is described in the slug profile at: <http://slugsite.us/bow/nudwk398.htm>

### **Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary**

Sanctuary and Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association staff responded as part of a Stranding Network Response Team, when a subadult (52 ft.) bull sperm whale washed up dead in the Point Reyes National Seashore. Sperm whale strandings are rare in the sanctuary. The team examined the carcass for signs of vessel strike or other external cause of death (none was found) and obtained tissue samples for analysis by a pathology lab. A fish net was found in the whale's stomach, but this was not pronounced the likely cause of death by veterinarians at the scene

Approximately 1,000 people attended the first annual San Francisco Ocean Film Festival, in which the sanctuary was a community partner. The highly successful event drew Bay Area residents to film screenings and related activities. A reception on the evening of January 9th kicked off the event, and Maria Brown, Ed Ueber and MJ Schramm attended. Ed was honored at the reception for his science communication, with NOAA CDR Steve Thompson presenting the award. English Channel solo swimmers were also lauded. The festival ran Saturday, January 10 and 11th, and

covered topics from conservation to recreation, science and adventure. Films ranged from marine protected areas, to natural history (topics such as squid sex, mollusk “survivors”), sailing and windsurfing, and marine debris. Segments from BBC Wildlife’s “Blue Planet” series were aired, as well as a montage of Farallones footage of sanctuary marine life by Emmy award filmmaker/white shark researcher Scot Anderson. A free Children’s Ocean Film Festival was offered on Saturday, with special hands-on activities such as creating jellyfish from plastic debris. An estimated 150 people attended the children’s festival.

Under the coordination of the sanctuary, eight regional NOAA agencies and offices established a strong regional NOAA presence at the San Francisco Boat and Fishing Show. They joined approximately 500 other exhibitors in reaching out to recreational boaters and anglers, commercial fishers and other marine-oriented groups with information on resources, regulations and guidelines, and services obtainable from the various agencies. NOAA representation at the show included Gulf of the Farallones, Cordell Bank and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries, the Office of Coastal Survey in Seaside, National Weather Service offices in Monterey and in Oakland, NOAA Law Enforcement, and National Marine Fisheries Service Recreational Fisheries in Long Beach.

#### **Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary**

The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Marine Debris Seminar was held in Honolulu from January 13th to 16<sup>th</sup>, hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and sponsored by the NMSP and NOAA Fisheries. The purpose of the seminar was to update all APEC members on the current status of the marine debris issue and to follow up on recommendations from the 2000 conference. The seminar focused on derelict fishing gear and related marine debris. Topics included regional case studies, science and policy, fishing gear and practices, and recovery, ports and disposal. This seminar is a follow up to the 2000 International Marine Debris Conference hosted by the sanctuary.

Sanctuary staff is busy planning and preparing for many upcoming whale season activities: Sanctuary Ocean Count, Whale Week on Oahu, Family Sunday at Bishop Museum, Dive Into Education Teacher Workshop, Whale Day at Border's Books and Music, Kauai Ocean Fair, Sanctuary Lecture Series on all islands, and Marine Conservation Evening, just to mention a few.

#### **Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary**

Sanctuary staff held several recent meetings with staff from NOAA Fisheries, Sea Grant and local research institutions focused on analyzing trawling practices and its impacts on the seafloor. The stakeholders of the "Effects of Bottom Trawling on Benthic Habitats" management plan review working group previously identified a research opportunity created by the recent closure of large portions of the continental shelf to trawling. These closures were implemented to protect depleted species of rockfish and could allow for the examination of recovery rates of benthic habitats in areas that have been trawled for decades. Sanctuary staff met with local researchers to refine the scope and potential methods of this study and have been working closely with

representatives of Fisheries to characterize trawling effort and habitat in order to identify appropriate sites. Sources of funding and ship time for the study have been identified and are being pursued.

On January 10th and 11th, Sanctuary education staff hosted a booth at Whalefest in Monterey. Approximately 800 people visited in the sanctuary booth, which included our life-size humpback whale, marine artifacts and printed materials. "Threatened and Thriving" posters were handed out to participants.

Sanctuary staffer Katie Siegler gave a presentation to 75 attendees at the "Farms and Fishes" workshop at the Ecological Farming Association Conference in Pacific Grove. She also helped co-organize this unique workshop, which for the first time brought together two diverse industries, fishing and farming, and evaluated their connections and implications for watershed management. Advisory council members representing agriculture, fishing, conservation and public seats also gave excellent presentations at the event.

#### **Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve/Proposed Sanctuary**

The Mokupapapa Discovery Center in Hilo continues to have strong visitation with 1242 visitors last week. In addition, two groups of 30 people visited the center to learn about the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The NOAA Center features multimedia exhibits, life-size marine life models, a 2500 gallon aquarium, and many colorful panels to introduce the visitor to the special marine environment of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

#### **Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary**

Sanctuary education specialist prepared final agendas and facilitated three meetings on the annual Olympic Coast Beach Clean-Up. Meetings took place at the sanctuary office on January 5, 2004. Participants included National Park Service, Feiro Marine Life Center, Makah Nation, Friends of Olympic Coast Marine Sanctuary, and Olympic Beach Clean-Up organizers.

#### **Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve**

On January 22, the sanctuary held an education roundtable to discuss integrating the sanctuary into the classroom. Eight teachers from around the area participated in the roundtable. The teachers will meet again in March.

#### **West Coast Sanctuaries**

A meeting involving the four California sanctuaries and NMSP headquarters staff representatives was held in San Jose, California, to discuss the Program's exhibits and facilities plan for California. Attendees will develop a coordinated, comprehensive plan that encompasses the existing and future exhibits and facilities plans of each sanctuary, and identify the actions to implement it. In addition, dialog will be initiated on what the common themes, messages, locations, audiences, and appearance for the signs, exhibits and facilities will be throughout California.

### **National Marine Sanctuary Program**

The program is working with the National Ocean Service to participate in the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival this summer. The theme of the festival is the Maritime Heritage of the Mid-Atlantic. The Smithsonian Folklife Festival brings to life the cultural traditions from around the world, and encourages visitors to participate -- to learn, sing, dance, eat traditional foods, and converse with people in the festival program. More than 1.7 million people visit the festival over a two-week period. This promises to be an excellent outreach and public relations opportunity for NOAA. To learn more about the festival, please visit:  
<http://www.folklife.si.edu/CFCH/festival2004.htm>

Program staff attended the annual U.S. Power Squadron Expo in Orlando January 15-16 and were well received by the new Chief Commander, Les Johnson, who is looking to enhance the squadron's partnership with NOAA. The squadron already works closely with NOAA Charting and the National Weather Service. Staff participated in the Government and Partnerships Committee and the newly formed Environmental Committee as well as exhibiting during a public expo. The primary objective of the organization is to teach classes in seamanship, navigation, and boater safety but they are looking to expand their volunteer role in coastal communities and offer additional courses on environmental subjects. The organization has some 60,000 members organized into 450 squadrons across the country and in some US territories and is America's largest non-profit boating organization.

The program held its semi-annual leadership team meeting at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California, during the week of January 5. The meeting helped elevate the sanctuary program's profile with the aquarium and facilitated the development of a strong and lasting partnership with the facility. The aquarium is currently embarking on a tens-of-millions-of-dollars capital campaign to build a new exhibit focused on the Channel Islands. The exhibit will include information about NOAA and the sanctuary program.

The program presented a live telepresence shot from Monterey Bay to over eighty students and teachers attending the National Student Summit on Ocean Issues at the NOAA Science Center. The live video, transmitted via SSMC's Internet2 connection, was projected on the wall of the center in a 25 x 25' image. The live shot was enthusiastically embraced by the students, who enjoyed pointing out anemonies, fish, and jellies that were in the field of vision. Deputy Secretary Bodman kept the image up behind him during his keynote speech and referred to it on several occasions. This represents the first time the sanctuaries' telepresence project has been successfully demonstrated in Silver Spring.

